

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

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SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

DECLARATION OF THE WRECK OF THE SÃO JOSÉ AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE

By virtue of the powers vested in the South African Heritage Resources Agency, in terms of section 27 (5) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) SAHRA hereby declares the Wreck of the *São José* off Clifton Second Beach, Clifton, Cape Town, Western Cape, to be a National Heritage Site.

Statement of Significance

The São José wrecked while rounding the Cape on its way from the Island of Mozambique to Brazil in the early hours of the 27th of December 1794. On board the ship were 500 slaves, 212 of whom were abandoned and left to drown, some still shackled below deck. Most slaves that survived the wrecking were saved solely for their commercial value and were subsequently sold into slavery in Cape Town.

The tragic story of the wrecking of the São José is an example of the disregard for human life exemplified by the slave trade across the globe. The São José was one of the first known attempts to bring East Africans into the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, something which ultimately contributed to prolonging the duration and intensity of the Slave Trade for decades.

As the first known slave ship discovered to have wrecked in transit with slaves on board, the Wreck of the São José advances the knowledge and understanding of slavery not only in South Africa but globally as it is the first slave wreck to have been scientifically studied and excavated. The site is also particularly special because of the links it establishes between the slaves' home countries in the African interior, the port in Mozambique from which the São José began her final voyage, the Portuguese origins of the ship, the ship's intended destination of Brazil, and its final resting place off the South African south west coast

Schedule

The wreck is situated at the position shown in Table 1, and the site is bound by the coordinates in Table 2:

Table 1 – The Wreck of the São José

Site Name	Position	Province	Nearest Town	Municipality
Wreck of the Slave Ship <i>São José</i>	125m from High Water Mark off Clifton Second Beach. GPS: -33.93711°, 18.37571°	Western Cape	Cape Town	City of Cape Town

Table 2 – Bounding Coordinates of the Site

Point number	Latitude	Longitude
1	-33.937213°	18.377044°
2	-33.936134°	18.377356°
3	-33.935453°	18.376341°
4	-33.935591°	18.374761°
5	-33.936480°	18.373673°
6	-33.938110°	18.373864°
7	-33.938944°	18.375892°
8	-33.938270°	18.376495°